
COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

***SUB-ELEMENT
of the
SUNNYVALE GENERAL PLAN***



CITY OF SUNNYVALE

This Sub-Element complies with California
Government Code Section 65300 and adopted by the
Sunnyvale City Council on
February 7, 1995

Office of the City Manager
Community Relations Office
City of Sunnyvale, California



City of Sunnyvale
Community Participation
Sub-Element of the General Plan

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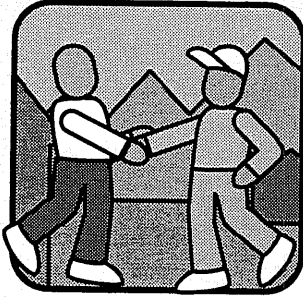
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PREFACE



The Community Participation Sub-Element of the Sunnyvale General Plan deals with the City's basic policies regarding citizen access to municipal services and information. It covers public information about City issues and programs, citizen involvement in the policy-making process, and the development of a positive community identity. Typically cities do not include the subject of citizen participation in their General Plans, and nor is it required to be included by the California Government Code. Sunnyvale was among the first cities in the state to have such a policy document when it originally adopted the Community Participation Sub-Element in 1983.

The Sunnyvale General Plan is the foundation policy document for Sunnyvale municipal services. The Plan's elements and sub-elements outline basic goals, policies and actions to guide the City's planning, budgeting and operations to achieve long-term community results in all areas of service over a ten- to twenty-year period. Using the General Plan as a framework, the Sunnyvale City Council and staff develop annual and ten-year budgets which include specific service levels and capital projects necessary to achieve the City's long range vision. Each year, the staff and Council review General Plan policies and action statements to establish priorities for municipal activities. Sub-elements themselves are reviewed after five years to determine whether they need updating, and generally are revised every five to ten years.

Since the first Community Participation Sub-Element was adopted, the City of Sunnyvale has accomplished the basic goals outlined in the General Plan. A summary of these achievements is included in Appendix B of the sub-element. Community conditions have changed over time, however, and the updated Community Participation Sub-Element both reflects these changes and builds on the City's accomplishments in this area of service since 1983. Significant changes have occurred in demographics, communications technology, regulatory requirements, and municipal resources affecting public information, citizen involvement, and policy-making processes. These changes required new policies and action statements in this sub-element of the Sunnyvale General Plan to assure that the City continues to be responsive to the needs of Sunnyvale citizens and businesses.

The Community Participation Sub-Element itself was prepared with citizen involvement. Focus groups of citizens and business

representatives provided insight regarding the content and priorities included in the revised document. Drafts were circulated within the community, and public feedback was incorporated. The sub-element also was reviewed by the City's advisory boards and commissions, and it was adopted after public hearings held by the Planning Commission and City Council.

The goals, policies and action statements contained in the Community Participation Sub-Element are based on a number of assumptions about the role of citizens in their government. Local government is most effective in identifying and responding to community needs when citizens have access to information and meaningful opportunity to participate in their government. An informed and involved citizenry, which is capable and committed to intelligently guiding the progress of their community, are the true basis for the ability of the City of Sunnyvale to serve the public well.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The goal of citizen participation in Sunnyvale is to achieve a community in which residents and businesses are able to effectively shape both their future and the future of their city. Community participation is an essential method for local government to identify and respond to citizens' concerns and needs, and therefore enhance the delivery of municipal services and policy-making processes.

Although City Hall has been a focus of community participation in the past, the City is establishing new approaches to improve the interaction between citizens and government. Budgetary considerations and growing public distrust in government, in general, make community participation an increasingly important component of government activities. These considerations also require the transformation from a more passive approach to community participation to a more active one. In order to communicate effectively with citizens, local government must become part of an information network of relationships which includes City Hall, residents, community-based organizations, business and industry, schools, and non-profit organizations.

In the future, the City will continue to increase its emphasis on the creation and maintenance of partnerships with individuals and organizations to help facilitate self-resolution of issues and addressing of needs within the community by those affected by them. Resource constraints, however, will require continuing evaluation of community participation activities and materials to ensure the most productive use of time and money.

The purpose of this Sub-Element of the Sunnyvale General Plan is to establish for the twenty-first century a comprehensive foundation for community participation in Sunnyvale. This document is an update of the Community Participation Sub-Element adopted in 1983. Many of the goals, policies and action statements contained in that plan are still relevant considerations for community participation today. New directions for citizen participation will be based on actions, policies and precedents created in the past, but will be modified to meet goals for the future.

Following an analysis of community characteristics and trends affecting participation, the Sub-Element focuses on five interrelated areas of citizen participation which represent a continuum; each section addresses a level of community participation based on

achieving the public information and involvement goals articulated in the previous sections. The organization of the Sub-Element is based on the premise that the first step towards citizen participation is education, followed by overall involvement of residents and businesses in the community which can lead to effective involvement in the City's policy-making processes. Community participation then enhances City services and heightens the sense of the community's identity. The five topic areas are discussed in greater detail below:

Community Education: An informed community is the first step towards effective citizen participation. Communication between City Hall and residents and businesses is the first, and one of the most important steps in building trust between citizens and local government. Citizens need comprehensive and usable information about City programs, services and policy-making processes in order to effectively participate in governmental processes.

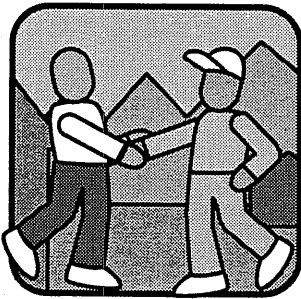
Community Involvement: Involvement of citizens in their community and local government helps enable the City to effectively meet the needs of its residents. Active participation by citizens develops a sense of commitment to the community and its improvement. The importance of community-wide involvement increases as the community becomes more diverse and fragmented. Citizens have a variety of opportunities to become involved in their community through local government and community-based organizations. Involvement supports the exchange of information in the community, which in turn supports involvement. Together, these involvement opportunities support the development of grass-roots solutions to community problems.

Policy Making and Program Planning: Citizens also have a range of opportunities to participate in local governmental policy making and program planning. Citizen input in the decision-making process is crucial in order to ensure that City programs and policies reflect the needs and goals of the community. Community input in policy making and program planning requires a genuine commitment on the part of both the City and the public to devote time and energy to effective participation. It also requires the development of relationships built on trust among the stakeholders of the community, and understanding of the limits of government.

Service Delivery: The actual delivery of municipal services is a primary arena of contact between citizens and City Hall. The level and quality of access to City staff, services and documents affects the extent to which residents are involved in their community, feel that local government serves their needs, and are able and willing to participate in civic affairs.

Community Identity: The strength and nature of a city's identity affects its citizens' sense of commitment and belonging to their community. Citizens must identify with their community in order to be willing to participate in the formation of its future and for local government to serve the citizens' needs. The development of a positive and healthy identity therefore reinforces the ability of community institutions and citizens to become involved, stay informed, and work towards common community goals.

Conditions Affecting Community Participation



Socioeconomic conditions and trends will affect the future nature and level of community participation in Sunnyvale. Maintaining awareness of and addressing the effects of these trends will allow the City to more effectively solicit citizen input, create partnerships with the community, and serve residents' and businesses' needs in light of their changing relationships with one another and with local government.

AGE

As in other parts of the country, the proportion of seniors in the population is expected to continue growing well into the next century. This trend may bring issues such as cost, accessibility and availability of services to the forefront of community participation priorities. At the same time, the number of children in school is again increasing after a fifteen year period of declining enrollments.

ETHNIC DIVERSITY

Sunnyvale's population is becoming increasingly diverse. The growing number of residents from a variety of racial and cultural backgrounds requires a more diversified approach to community participation programs, recruitment of representatives for City advisory groups, and provision of information. The widening scope of residents' needs creates a challenge for the City to develop opportunities to encourage participation of all residents in the community.

FAMILY STRUCTURE

Sunnyvale's growing number of single parent families and families with two working parents indicates that community members may not have as much time for community participation as they did in past decades. In addition, many residents do not live in what once

were considered "traditional" families. This trend will affect the issues which stimulate community participation and the types of communication with citizens which may be effective.

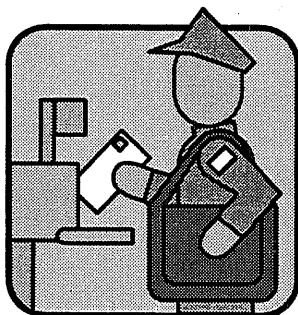
ECONOMY

Although Sunnyvale experienced considerable economic growth in the 1980's, by the end of the decade the combination of recession, economic restructuring, and statewide governmental finance constraints began limiting resources available to local government. In this context, resources for community participation and other City services will need to become more focused and less costly. Residents and businesses have begun to take on greater responsibility for functions traditionally provided by local government, and this trend will continue.

TECHNOLOGY

Widespread use of personal computers and growth of telecommunications technology over the last 15 years has affected the nature of communication between citizens and City Hall, and will continue in the future. New communications technologies will provide new opportunities and challenges for coordination and communication within the community and may create new forums for citizen participation. The "information superhighway" concept will lead to wider use of technology for communication and information access, and will integrate telecommunications, databases, and a wide range of information services. Investment in technology, however, will need to be balanced with its ability to produce efficiently and effectively, rather than merely adding to costs.

Community Education



Sunnyvale is committed to informing the community about local government issues and programs in order to provide citizens with the background needed to participate effectively. In addition, community education provides a starting point for communication between citizens and City Hall. The City has identified several directions for community education in the future.

COMMUNITY NETWORKS

Community networks provide an opportunity to inform citizens in a cost effective and comprehensive manner. In the future, strengthening partnerships with neighborhoods and community-based organizations would develop forums for communication and information exchange between residents and the City as well as among individuals and organizations in the community.

PUBLICATIONS

Informational publications will continue to be a widely used medium for information dissemination. Changes in technology and increased awareness of the needs of all segments of the population will create a challenge for more effective use of this method of community education.

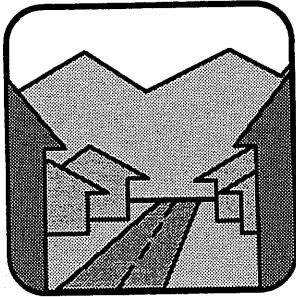
NEWS MEDIA

Coverage of Sunnyvale issues and services in the news media reaches a wide spectrum of the population in a cost-effective manner. This coverage is limited by the range of circulation of print and broadcast media, as well as the competition for space and time in required media. The City will continue to support open and responsive relationships with the news media to achieve effective communication with the public.

APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY

Growth and increasing availability of high technology forms of information distribution such as cable television and telecommunications systems (including "audiotext" telephone services and electronic mail), present a new challenge to the City to identify the appropriate levels of use. These methods of information distribution and coordination have the potential to be tremendously effective for communication and education, but may create problems related to access and cost/benefit considerations.

Community Involvement



Community involvement strengthens citizens' commitment to the community, increases the level of information exchanged about problems and opportunities, and enhances community-based problem solving. The City directly encourages citizen involvement in several areas.

VOLUNTEERISM

Use of volunteers provides the City with a method to leverage its ability to provide services to the community. For citizens, volunteering in local government represents an opportunity to become more knowledgeable about local government and their communities, and to build skills and gain experience. Volunteers also provide the City with an important source of contact with citizens, which contributes to information sharing between staff and the community.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

Partnerships with community based organizations allow the City to broaden the scope of local community involvement and mutual support and problem solving. As the role of local government changes and limited financial resources constrain its ability to serve the community, productive relationships with a wide range of grass-roots organizations, nonprofit services and interest groups will become both effective and essential for cities and citizens to address issues in the future. The City will explore new opportunities to create partnerships with citizens and facilitate organization and communication among them through cooperation and support of community organizations.

NEIGHBORHOODS

Municipal services affect neighborhoods directly, and the quality of life in neighborhoods is the product of active residents and municipal commitment at high levels of cooperation. Coordination of a range of public services affecting neighborhoods, such as public safety, public works, and neighborhood preservation will contribute to more effective use of resources and information by the City, as well as support for healthy neighborhood networks of citizens.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SCHOOLS

Increasing the awareness of and involvement in local government in schools can improve the likelihood that students will be active

participants in municipal affairs throughout their lives. In the future, the City would like to enhance communication with school districts and teachers to improve the presentation of information about local government and citizen responsibilities in schools.

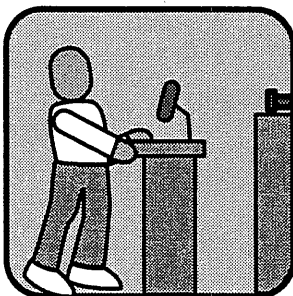
EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES

Sunnyvale has a significant daytime population of workers, many of whom do not live in the City. As a recipient of City services and a party affected by City policies, Sunnyvale's business community is an integral component of community participation. The City will need to explore partnerships with business in the future to optimize employer and employee involvement in the community.

PHILANTHROPY

Sunnyvale's companies are in a position to be active partners in addressing community issues and improving the quality of life for residents and their employees. Business philanthropy can take the form of volunteer programs, involvement in policy making and service delivery, and corporate giving. Innovative partnerships between the City, corporations and community organizations will grow in importance as each partner looks for effective solutions to provide greater leverage of resources to meet community needs.

Policy Making and Program Planning



Citizen input in policy making is one of the most challenging and important elements of community participation. Based on a well-informed and committed citizenry, public participation is crucial to the formation of policies and programs which reflect the goals of the community and addresses the needs of residents and businesses, and balances services with available resources. Effective community participation in policy making and program planning requires significant commitment on the part of citizens and the City, but provides significant payoff in terms of responsive policies and services which receive public support.

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

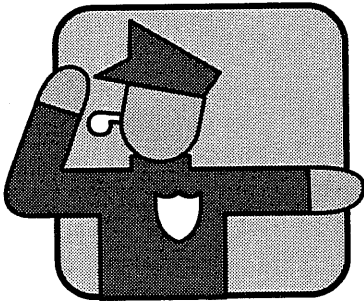
Boards and commissions are a direct form of citizen involvement in City policy making and program planning. Due to the need for boards and commissions which adequately and effectively represent the community during decision-making processes, recruitment and

training of board and commission members will be special areas of focus in the future.

PUBLIC INPUT

Maintaining an open dialogue between citizens and staff on policy issues is an important component of a relationship of trust between the City and the community. For issues of high sensitivity or those which affect significant portions of the population, the City provides affected citizens with the opportunity for direct input. Public input in policy making provides the City with an additional opportunity to enhance communication and maintain contact with the community through staff, residents and community organizations.

Service Delivery



For many citizens, their primary contact with local government is through City services. Their experiences with City services will affect their perception of City Hall, for better or worse. Positive encounters with good customer service from the City helps create a civic environment which can encourage further citizen involvement.

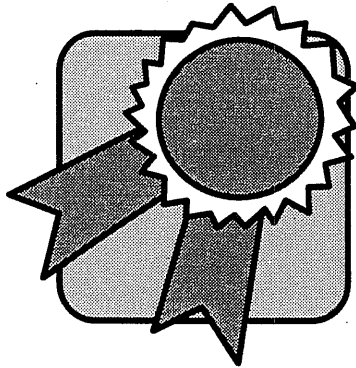
ACCESSIBILITY

Accessibility of City facilities, programs, services, officials and staff is a primary factor in maintaining an environment which is conducive to community participation. Inaccessible locations and information can make it difficult or impossible for citizens to receive municipal services and participate in programs, thus weakening both the City's ability to provide necessary services and individuals' ties to the community. The City's goal is to make City programs and services accessible to appropriate populations in order to increase citizens' ability to participate in the community. At the same time, the City's ability to meet the ever-increasing demand for services will be limited. Community participation activities have the potential to create demand which cannot be met, and the City will need to clarify and focus its efforts with these results in mind.

CITIZEN FEEDBACK

Encouraging feedback from citizens and being responsive to their concerns are important factors in creating a positive environment for local government. These considerations are also central to Sunnyvale's orientation towards customer service. Evaluation of appropriate response mechanisms such as opinion surveys and feedback questionnaires is an ongoing task for City staff to keep up with changes in community conditions.

Community Identity

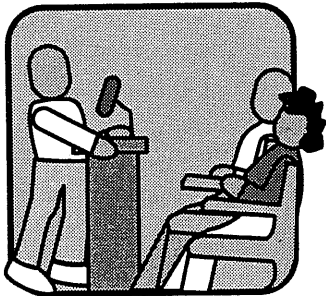


Citizens must have a sense of the community to which they belong before they are willing to become involved. Sunnyvale's goal in enhancing and promoting its identity is to foster greater citizen involvement in their community. Greater involvement empowers the community and creates civic pride. These in turn support a greater level of involvement which reflects the needs, goals and character of its residents.

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION AND EVENTS

Recognition of individuals and City achievements helps create a positive attitude towards local government and encourages greater community involvement. Citizen achievements are recognized at the annual State of the City event which, along with special events held by departments throughout the City, provides a forum for bringing citizens together and celebrating the Sunnyvale community. Events, activities and promotions that contribute to both individual and community recognition are opportunities to develop and strengthen a positive identity and reputation for Sunnyvale, which then can help support other City and community goals.

Goals and Policies



Based upon the above findings and issues, the following goals and policies for community participation are proposed:

Community Education

GOAL 7.2A

Achieve a community in which citizens and businesses are informed about local issues and City programs and services.

Policy 7.2A.1 - Community Networks

Use community and business organizations and networks as a resource for community education and outreach.

Policy 7.2A.2 - Information Distribution

Publish and distribute information regarding City programs and services, City Council actions, and policy issues.

Policy 7.2A.3 - Media Coverage

Encourage comprehensive media coverage of City actions, programs and decisions.

Policy 7.2A.4 - Appropriate Technology

Identify communications media and telecommunications technology which are appropriate and cost-effective to provide information to and access for the community.

Community Involvement

Goal 7.2B

Achieve a community in which citizens and businesses are actively involved in shaping the quality of life and participate in local community and government activities.

Policy 7.2B.1 - Planning and Implementation

Plan for and encourage citizen involvement in the development and implementation of City and community programs and services.

Policy 7.2B.2 - Volunteerism

Encourage citizen volunteerism in community affairs.

Policy 7.2B.3 - Community Organizations

Support local and neighborhood organizations and strengthen contacts between the City and community groups.

Policy 7.2B.4 - Community Self-Reliance

Encourage and support the development of greater community self-reliance for problem solving through effective community and neighborhood organizations.

Policy 7.2B.5 - Partnerships

Foster partnerships and relationships among public institutions, business and industry, community and service organizations, and the City to address community issues.

Policy 7.2B.6 - Philanthropy

Encourage citizen contributions and business volunteerism, involvement and philanthropy to support community programs and activities.

Policy Making and Program Planning**Goal 7.2C**

Assure that City services, programs and policy decisions are responsive to community input and feedback while recognizing the limits to the City's ability to expand municipal services.

Policy 7.2C.1 - Representation

Plan for and encourage an appropriate cross-section of the community when obtaining public input for policy decisions.

Policy 7.2C.2 - Notification and Access

Ensure that appropriate and effective notification and access, in accordance with City Council policies, are provided to enhance meaningful community participation in the policy-making process.

Policy 7.2C.3 - Staff Role

Use City staff as facilitators to promote and enhance community involvement in policy making and program planning.

Policy 7.2C.4 - Citizen Involvement in Policy Making

Assure that citizens and organizations are actively involved in the identification of community needs and the development of solutions.

Policy 7.2C.5 - Feedback

Provide opportunities for community input and monitor feedback.

Service Delivery

Goal 7.2D

Assure that all citizens have reasonable access to City information, services, programs, policy makers and staff.

Policy 7.2D.1 - Needs Assessment

Assess community needs in provision of and access to City services.

Policy 7.2D.2 - Marketing

Provide opportunities for all citizens and organizations to successfully interact and do business with the City.

Policy 7.2D.3 - Access

Identify methods to continue reasonable and fair citizen access to information and services within budgeted resources.

Community Identity

Goal 7.2E

Create a strong, positive community identity.

Policy 7.2E.1 - Recognition

Encourage public and professional recognition through awards and promotion of significant accomplishments and innovations.

Policy 7.2E.2 - Community Celebration

Encourage celebrations of community and projects which focus on the character, diversity and quality of Sunnyvale.

Policy 7.2E.3 - Regional Role

Take an appropriate active role in regional, state and national activities.

COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS

Demographics have a major impact on the type and level of community participation. Population trends and economic conditions in Sunnyvale are discussed below, along with their implications for community participation. This data is also referenced in other sections of this document.

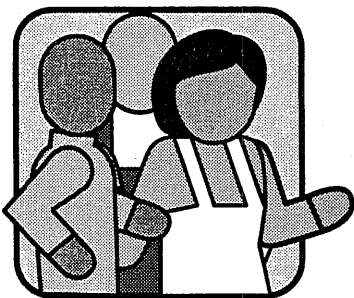
Age

Seniors have a history of community participation in Sunnyvale. A 1989 survey of Board and Commission members found that 35% of members are over 55, in comparison to 19% of the City's population overall.

Growth of the older adult population which began in the 1980's will continue through the 1990's. In 1980, 18.5% of Sunnyvale's population was comprised of adults over the age of 55. That percentage increased to 19.3% in 1990, and will continue to grow. Based on Santa Clara County projections (adjusted for the 3% higher proportion of adults over 55 in Sunnyvale), this group will account for 22.3% of the population in 2000 and 28.3% in 2010 (data from Recreation Sub-Element).

The type of issues that citizens will be requesting the City to address likely will reflect the changing characteristics of the older adult population. Issues relating to needs of individuals living on fixed incomes, housing and medical care cost and accessibility, and availability and types of leisure service will be of increasing concern to Sunnyvale residents. The City will need to address the social and physical needs of the older adult population in solicitation of input and involvement. The proportion of households with children has continued to decline over the past two decades. At present, only one in six households has children, compared to one in three in 1970, although the number of families with children has increased since the 1980's. The proportion of families with children affects citizen involvement in many ways, since families tend to participate in many City services such as recreation and sports.

Ethnic Diversity



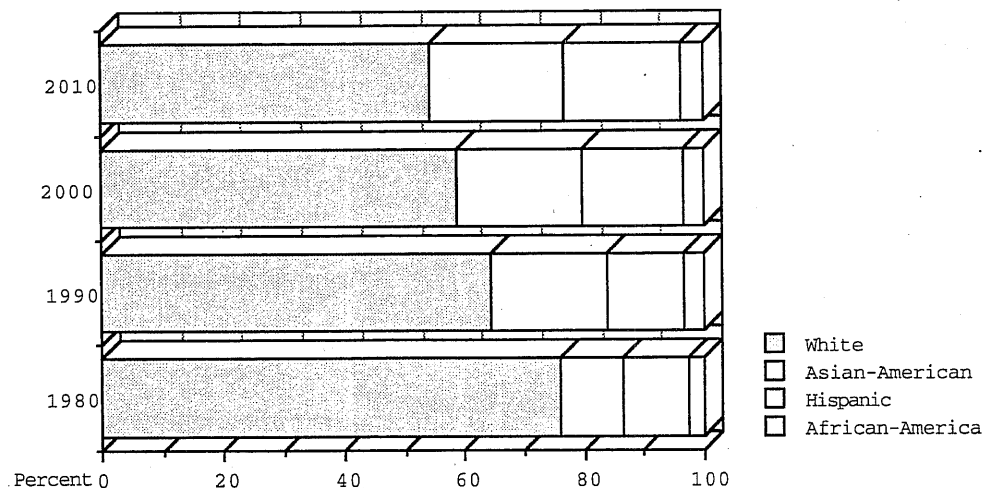
Sunnyvale's ethnic diversity is continuing to increase at a steady rate consistent with trends statewide. In 1980, 25% of Sunnyvale's population was composed of ethnic minorities. In 1990, that percentage had increased to 35.5%. According to the 1990 census, 19.3% of Sunnyvale residents are Asian American, 3.4% are African American, and 12.8% are of Hispanic origin. All groups show increases from the 1980 figures of 10.5% Asian American, 2.5% African American and 10.9% Hispanic. The Asian American population in Sunnyvale is primarily of Chinese and Filipino origin,

with a substantial representation of Japanese and Vietnamese as well (data from 1990 U.S. Census).

The following population trends are based on the 1980 U.S. Census and the State Department of Finance Official Population Projections Report, April 1993, for the County of Santa Clara. Figures are adjusted based on differences in population proportions between Santa Clara County and Sunnyvale. The proportion of Asian Americans is included in the State's "other" category, and is estimated for Sunnyvale based on 1990 U.S. Census figures.

Table 7.2-1: Sunnyvale Population Trends (by race)

	1980	1990	2000	2010
White	76.1%	64.5%	58.9%	54.3%
Asian-American	10.5	19.3	20.7	22.3
Hispanic	10.9	12.8	16.9	19.8
African-American	02.5	03.4	03.5	03.6



Facilitating effective participation in a community with such increasing diversity will require understanding of and sensitivity to diverse cultural needs as well as new methods of outreach. The availability of translation services is one obvious implication. Twenty-two percent of the persons living in Sunnyvale today were born outside the United States. Twenty-seven percent of Sunnyvale's population speaks a language other than English in the home; 4,522 adults in Sunnyvale report that they speak English "not well" or "not at all" (data from 1994-1998 CHAS). It is estimated that, in 1990, 16.3% of Spanish-speaking individuals and 33.8% of Asian-language speaking individuals were limited by their lack of English language proficiency (data from Recreation Sub-Element).

Over the last 10 years, growing percentages of elementary school students with limited English speaking ability (Table 7.2-2) indicate the increasing cultural diversity in Sunnyvale. Figures are from the Sunnyvale Elementary School District (the Sunnyvale Elementary School District serves two thirds of the City; trends are similar in the Fremont Union and Cupertino-Santa Clara School Districts, which serve the remainder of Sunnyvale).

Table 7.2-2: Elementary School Students with Limited English Ability

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of Limited English Students</i>	<i>Percent of Enrollment</i>
1983-1984	580	10.7 %
1984-1985	580	11.2 %
1985-1986	598	12.0 %
1986-1987	714	13.7 %
1987-1988	796	14.7 %
1988-1989	831	15.2 %
1989-1990	927	16.9 %
1990-1991	1027	18.2 %
1991-1992	1113	19.1 %
1992-1993	1237	21.3 %

***Community participation
focus group participants
emphasized the need for
the City to understand
the different values,
effective communication
methods, needs and
relationships with
government of citizens
from different cultures.***

The increasing percentage of residents with different cultural backgrounds could have an impact on civic involvement in Sunnyvale. Residents from other cultures may have varying levels of interest or desire for community participation if their experience or knowledge of democratic values, traditional rights and responsibilities of citizens and roles of government is different than that of Sunnyvale residents in the past. In addition, these residents may feel that they are not represented by or connected to local government or may regard government with suspicion or hostility.

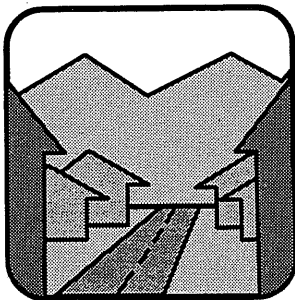
Efforts should be made to ensure that the needs of residents with limited English language abilities are being addressed. In addition, public outreach and involvement efforts will need to provide for communication and representation of members from a variety of cultural groups. Efforts could include distribution of multi-lingual informational brochures, use of a telephone language translation service, and increased reliance on small meetings in neighborhoods for obtaining citizen input.

Family Structure

Changes in family life will continue to affect the needs of residents and the nature of community participation in Sunnyvale. In 1990, both parents worked in two thirds of two-parent families in Sunnyvale. Nineteen percent of all families were single-parent families. Community participation efforts should address the needs of residents with limited time to devote to community activities (data from Recreation Sub-Element).

Another important trend is the proportion of families in Sunnyvale. Twenty-two percent of Sunnyvale residents do not live in "traditional" families. Residents who live alone or with people who are not family members may have different needs, priorities, and levels of interest in their community and different effective methods of communication than parents and children. For example, use of materials distributed in schools to inform residents of municipal issues would not be an effective way to communicate with these residents.

Housing



*In 1989, approximately
87% of City boards and
commission members
were homeowners.*

It is important for the City to consider the extent to which housing types may affect citizen involvement. Fifty-five percent of Sunnyvale's housing units are occupied by renters. It is possible that residents who rent their homes may feel that they are less affected by City actions than those who own homes, and would therefore have less incentive to provide input for long-term City policymaking and program planning. Yet the high proportion of residents who are renters makes them major contributors to the City's economy and major users of City services.

The type of housing unit in which a resident lives can also affect information needs, communication considerations and issues of importance. Forty-two percent (42%) of Sunnyvale residents live in multi-unit structures. Existing methods of information delivery, such as information included on utility bills, are limited in their ability to communicate with residents of multi-unit structures who generally are not direct utility customers of the City.

Surveys to evaluate the effectiveness of City publications also found that renters are less likely to receive or use materials mailed directly. Apartment residents also may have different requirements of City services such as public recreational space or recycling pickup. It is important that the needs of these residents are represented in the planning of City programs and services (data from 1990 U.S. Census).

Income and Economics



Sunnyvale residents have a median household income of \$46,403 and a median family income of \$53,081; in Santa Clara County overall, the median household income is \$48,115 and the median family income is \$53,670 (data from 1990 U.S. Census). Twenty-six percent of Sunnyvale's population is considered low income, i.e., earning less than 80% of the median household income for the area.

The highest concentration of low income residents lives in the area bordered by Homestead Road, Fremont Avenue, Hollenbeck Road and Sunnyvale-Saratoga Road; 55% of the population of this area are defined as "low income" by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Thirty-one percent of the population north of El Camino Real and Old San Francisco Road are low income, while only 17% of the population south of this line are low income (data from 1994-1998 CHAS).

The statewide and regional economic recession that began in the late 1980's reduced the amount of revenue available for municipal governments. During the 1980's, Sunnyvale expanded the resources available for community participation. The economic downturn has required City Hall to closely review its resource allocations for all municipal services to identify realistic priorities and evaluate them for effectiveness.

In addition, the recession and economic restructuring have reduced employment in local defense and electronics industries. This in turn may affect residents' perceptions of government and increase demands for responsiveness. As a result of both social and economic trends, perceptions of the capabilities of local government are changing, and City Hall has been compelled to find new ways of leveraging its abilities to provide services and communicate with citizens.

Education

City residents are highly educated, with 67% of residents over 18 having attended some college. The high education levels of Sunnyvale residents may affect both their level of involvement and the types of issues in which they are interested (data from 1990 U.S. Census).

Technology

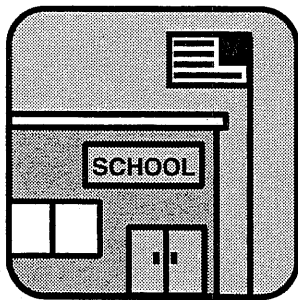


Widespread use of personal computers began in the 1980's and changed the shape of communication and information exchange. New developments such as widespread availability of computer networking capabilities and the expanding role of telecommunications technology have broad implications for community education, organization and participation. Sunnyvale should determine its future direction and capability for use of high technology methods of interaction with the community.

The City now has a municipal cable television channel which carries City Council and Planning Commission meetings both live and taped; in addition, the channel plays a "community bulletin board" which provides another tool for reaching residents. Reaching the full potential of cable television for community education will require ongoing review and additional resources; some issues to consider are the percentage of cable subscribers in the City and the inability of businesses and mobile homes to access the cable channel.

Technology developments have allowed the City to begin an "audio-text" service in 1994 to provide 24-hour recorded information on hundreds of topics of interest to citizens. Widespread growth of interest in Internet and related on-line electronic communications services will require the City to assess the cost and benefit of technology enhancements. Rapid changes in technology open many new opportunities, but also raise important questions of cost, access and impact for both the City and the community. Among these impacts to assess are the potential to generate greater public demand for municipal services, as well as the potential duplication of effort and investment for communications.

Community Gathering



Schools, Parks and Other Centers

Community gathering places such as schools and parks help enhance residents' sense of community identity, provide opportunities for formal and informal communication, and can act as centers for citizen participation in service delivery.

Local schools have traditionally provided an important focal point for community participation on both the neighborhood and citywide levels. Many City parks are adjacent to school facilities, increasing their importance as a community resource. The relationship between community open space and schools sites is discussed in greater detail in the Open Space Sub-Element.

Sunnyvale is served by two elementary, one unified, one union high school and one community college district. This creates a complex relationship among schools, local government and citizens. There are 21 public and private schools located within the City limits; five high schools in neighboring cities are attended by students from Sunnyvale as well.

Several school facilities have been closed over the past decade as a result of declining school enrollments, reflecting the reduction in the number of families with children in Sunnyvale. Fewer families with children decreases the effectiveness of schools as a point of information distribution. In addition, the presence of children in a family can make residents more aware of community resources. The decreasing number of schools also results in a loss of neighborhood focal points and raises important questions about future school site uses.

Residents use other centers for gathering points, however. Parks are one example; the new dog park at Las Palmas Park represents a new locus of citizen networking. Another example is the Sunnyvale Town Center, which has provided storefront space for Sunnyvale's youth employment services. The Downtown Plan is also being developed to enhance Murphy Avenue as an active town center through private development. The opening of a weekend Farmer's Market on Murphy Avenue in summer 1994 will help bring people to the Downtown area and enhance it as a community focal point. Malls, shopping centers, and libraries are all potential network points for the community.

Community Organizations

Community organizations provide citizens with opportunities for involvement and interaction centered around a specific topic or issue. While not all community organizations impacting Sunnyvale are located within City limits, many area-wide organizations have Sunnyvale citizens as members.

There are over 200 community organizations in Sunnyvale, including service clubs, lodges, political groups, senior groups, and professional organizations. The City co-sponsors and supports neighborhood and community organizations focused around such topics as neighborhood preservation, community leadership, and recreation and arts. The number of residents involved in community organizations provides an effective tool for communication and involvement among individuals, organizations and the City.

Sunnyvale's schools (including preschools and local colleges), religious institutions, and community centers provide a point of communication and contact for community participation efforts. These institutions have traditionally served as focal points for community service projects and social action issues.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Planning and evaluation of community education activities also need to assess their impact on the City's ability to provide municipal services.

If the result of comprehensive public information efforts is to expand public demand for service for which resources are not sufficient, it could lead to an adverse impact for the City and the community. This will be an ongoing challenge for the future to balance appropriate and effective public education with the limits on the City's resources to deliver what the public demands.

An informed citizenry is the first step towards effective community participation. Citizens who know the issues, are familiar with the role of local government, and understand the decision-making process are likely to be the most successful in influencing the governmental process and keep government responsive to the public's needs.

In his 1991 book, *Coming to Public Judgment*, Daniel Yankelovich noted that "most average citizens are ill-prepared to exercise their responsibilities for self-governance, even though they have a deep-seated desire to have more of a say in decisions," and that the public needs to be given the incentive and information to form considered judgments in order to participate effectively (Daniel Yankelovich, *Coming to Public Judgment*, Syracuse University Press, 1991). Informed citizens will derive a higher level of personal satisfaction from participating, and are willing to invest more time in active involvement over a longer period.

The City of Sunnyvale takes a proactive approach in providing citizens with information regarding City services, Council decisions, and City programs and policies. The goal has been focused on bringing government closer to the citizens, while establishing two-way communication between the City and the community. The City currently uses a variety of sources and techniques to ensure that information is disseminated in a timely, objective and understandable manner.

In 1993, the City analyzed its overall investment in ongoing activities to provide public information through publications, news media relations, and volunteer support. These activities were estimated to cost more than \$750,000 a year, and included efforts by many City departments. Moreover, specific actions to educate the public regarding a wide range of issues are required by state and federal statute to meet community goals.

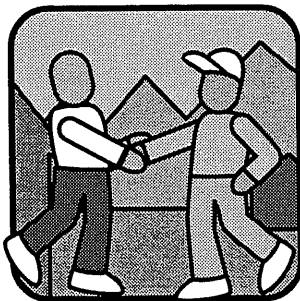
It is likely that the full cost of the City's commitment to public education and community participation is much higher when the amount of staff time and other City resources are taken into account. It is also appropriate to balance this investment, however, with the avoidance of costs that might have occurred as a result of not including public participation in the policy-making process.

Communication is a high priority for residents, community leaders, elected officials, and staff. The public desire for effective public information has been identified repeatedly in surveys, focus group meetings, and studies designed to explore ways to enhance community participation in Sunnyvale. Communication enhancements could include identifying and targeting the information needs of specific population groups, increasing feedback mechanisms, making sure that language used is appropriate to the task, diversifying the methods used to disseminate information, and providing more information sources through use of new telecommunications technologies.

In a community with a wide spectrum of informational needs, levels of access, and possible methods of information distribution, it is important to focus on defining criteria for appropriate content and forms of community education. "Appropriate" forms of information distribution are cost effective, reach the desired population and number of people, provide the essential information in language and style which is understood by the receiver, and allow for reasonable allocation of City Hall resources. Changes in technology, resources, and community conditions, such as demographics or issues of concern, require continued reassessment of available means of community education to ensure that City actions meet the established goals for public information.

Community Networks

Refer to Policy 7.2A1



Community organizations and networks provide an opportunity for formal and informal community education. Maintaining contact with community organizations and providing them with information about City programs, services and policy decisions is an effective form of information distribution. It provides a means for targeting information towards likely users and affected groups, although the effort can require more extensive commitments of time to establish and maintain organizational relationships. In addition, communicating with residents and businesses through the use of community networks strengthens support between the City and the community by bringing City outreach efforts to residents rather than requiring residents to seek opportunities for involvement at City Hall.

Existing programs developed by the community and the City, in cooperation, provide an opportunity for the City to enhance its ties to residents. The SNAP and PARTNERS programs are two examples of community networks which were created around specific issues but

provide a forum for general neighborhood organization and communication. The City also conducts environmental outreach programs and provides speakers for community groups; both of these efforts create opportunities for communication and information distribution through community networks.

Community organizations and businesses often publish their own newsletters to reach their members on matters of concern. These publications offer opportunities to the City to provide relevant information to them about municipal programs and issues.

Informational Publications

Refer to Policy 7.2A.2



The City distributes a wide variety of printed information directly to residents. Several City programs produce or co-produce publications to inform residents of programs, services, procedures, and issues. Some educational materials are established publications or are distributed according to state or City policies; others are created and discontinued according to need and demand.

PUBLIC NOTICE OF LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS

The City has developed a public notice program to ensure that affected citizens are informed of major Council and City actions, as well as to comply with legal requirements. The goal is to provide citizens with timely, factual information regarding effective participation in the decision-making process. Public notices are also made for actions by boards and commissions which might impact citizens.

Publication of the Council agenda and minutes is required by the City Charter. Agendas are published in the San Jose Mercury News on Mondays prior to Council meetings and are posted in the Library and the City Hall Reception and Information Center at least 72 hours prior to meetings. Community members can also ask questions and receive agenda information via the Council Agenda telephone hotline. The Council minutes digest is published in the San Jose Mercury News the Thursday following Council meetings.

Copies of related staff reports are available in the Library and City Clerk's office before the meetings and in the Council Chambers during the meetings. The Library is a repository of major City documents of significant public interest, as well as of videotapes of Council and Commission meetings, making this information available in evenings and on weekends.

City Council and Planning Commission meetings are regularly televised over KSUN, the City's municipal access cable television channel. Other meetings of City panels are cablecast on occasions which warrant wider public involvement or interest.

The City informs affected citizens about Council proceedings. Notices of public hearings are posted or distributed in areas where residents and businesses are impacted by Council decisions; areas affected are determined on a case-by-case basis. The City also publishes display advertisements relating to specific issues in the San Jose Mercury News and sends relevant staff reports to appropriate property owners and citizens who have requested copies. Mailing lists are developed for issues of citywide concern, such as the Downtown Plan, and are later used for subsequent notification. Reports to the City Council require specific attention to public notification measures.

CITY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

City departments work independently and cooperatively to produce educational publications on City programs and services. These publications include the comprehensive Quarterly Report, bimonthly utility bill stuffers, the Recreation Activities Guide, and a bimonthly business newsletter. Each City program assesses community information needs in light of its customer service focus and budgetary performance indicators. As the City improves its ability to identify needs for information and forecast trends, departments will be able to take an increasingly proactive approach to providing community members with appropriate and timely information using a variety of media.

To facilitate access to information about City Government services, the Community Relations Office has produced a Citizen Access Handbook for distribution to community-based organizations, civic leaders and citizens. Information about City programs, services, administrative procedures and telephone numbers is summarized by department.

Many City programs currently rely heavily on "low technology" forms of community education, such as fliers and direct mail, newspaper articles and advertisements, and telephone and person-to-person or door-to-door contact. Low-tech dissemination of information provides the value of a personal, tailored approach to communication, and usually is an effective means to assure that information is being provided to affected populations.

In a 1993 survey, program managers indicated that a primary obstacle to more effective information distribution is the difficulty in identifying and reaching all target audiences. Specific populations

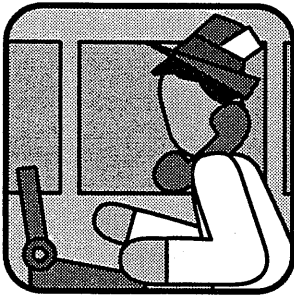
The Sunnyvale Direct Information Access Line (SunDIAL) was established in January of 1995 to provide convenient, 24-hour recorded information about City services. Through SunDIAL, the public has access to hundreds of informational messages about City services. As an added bonus, a number of SunDIAL messages also have fax documents which accompany them.

identified as being especially difficult to reach were citizens in multi-family residences, residents with native languages other than English and community members from a variety of cultural backgrounds. With demographic trends toward more diversity, this issue will be a high priority for the City to address.

The 1990 Leadership Sunnyvale class project, entitled "Strengthening Communication Within the Community," found that an important element of any information distribution device is a feedback mechanism to monitor the effectiveness of communication.

Media Relations

Refer to Policy 7.2A.3



News media is one of the most effective tools for reaching the largest number of citizens with information regarding City issues, programs and events. The media is the only link for many citizens to City government affairs and decision making. Results of series of focus group discussions held by the Kettering Foundation with citizens across the country in 1990 and 1991 shows that many citizens want the media to "play a more active role in promoting citizens' knowledge on policy issues." (Richard C. Harwood, "Citizens and Politics: A View from Main Street America," *Western City*, The League of California Cities, p. 10).

Media relations is a priority of the Community Relations Office, the focal point for City-wide public information. The City has a comprehensive media relations policy outlining the City's philosophy of providing access to the press and detailing the process for contact with reporters. The Community Relations Office provides formal and informal training to staff and councilmembers regarding effective communication with the press; communications training is also included in the annual management certificate training program. The Community Relations Office also coordinates direct communication with news media by orienting new reporters to Sunnyvale on City processes, assuring the availability of public documents, reports and staff, and preparing news releases when warranted.

PRINT MEDIA

The San Jose Mercury News serves as the primary newspaper in the South Bay; however, the Mercury News focuses primarily on events in San Jose and provides limited coverage of Sunnyvale. Items of interest to Sunnyvale are covered in the Mercury's "EXTRA" section, a weekly supplement distributed in Sunnyvale, Santa Clara, and Cupertino.

The Sunnyvale Sun was established in 1993 as a member of a chain of community weekly newspapers owned by Metro publishing. The Sun provides more comprehensive coverage of Sunnyvale than the Mercury News, but its circulation is essentially limited to single family households in central and southern Sunnyvale. Service to north Sunnyvale and multifamily residences is minimal, which leaves a large section of the community without regular civic information. Reporters from the San Jose Mercury News and the Sunnyvale Sun are assigned full time to cover local Sunnyvale news; City Council meetings are regularly covered by at least one reporter.

In addition to the local newspapers, there are a variety of regional, ethnic and specialty newspapers. While these do not provide routine coverage of Sunnyvale, they do have Peninsula/South Bay bureau staff which report on significant issues of interest to the Bay Area. This information is read within Sunnyvale and helps shape Sunnyvale's identity in the region.

Print is a very effective medium for providing information to citizens as it is accessible to a wide spectrum of the population and is a cost-effective method of communication. Circulation for local and County-based newspapers serving Sunnyvale is shown below.

Newspaper	Sunnyvale Circulation	Total Circulation
San Jose Mercury News	22,193 daily 26,337 Sunday	269,286 daily 332,080 Sunday
The Sun	24,000 weekly	—

Circulation figures include subscriptions and copies of papers sold individually at newsstands and distribution points. 47% of Sunnyvale households (approximately 22,700 homes) have daily subscriptions to the San Jose Mercury News and 56% (approximately 27,000 homes) receive Sunday subscriptions. Although newspapers from outside Santa Clara County such as the San Francisco Chronicle and the Oakland Tribune have some limited circulation in Sunnyvale, they are not a significant source of news for most Sunnyvale residents.

The number of newspapers serving Sunnyvale declined with the closure of the Peninsula Times Tribune in 1992, taking with it a chain of weeklies, including Sunnyvale's Valley Journal. The Sun was started by the Metro soon after the Valley Journal stopped publishing, however. The long term future for newspapers of all kinds is undergoing significant change throughout the nation as competition

from other media technologies, coupled with higher costs of business, put pressure on newspapers. These trends are likely to have an effect on local newspaper service.

BROADCAST MEDIA

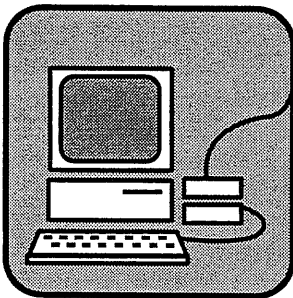
Broadcast media is an important area of focus for information distribution due to the potential for a wide audience. Although information about Sunnyvale on television and radio news is limited, broadcast media provides other opportunities for wide exposure to information about City decisions and policies if there is a wider regional impact to them.

SPECIALTY AND TRADE MEDIA

Municipal issues and services are covered by a wide range of trade and professional journals. Specialty media are publications which reach an audience which may be interested in specific issues, such as the *Business Journal*. Trade media focus on issues of interest to local government. Although these publications reach a narrow focus audience, they often contribute to the overall reputation of the City, and sometimes become the source of information for general media.

Communications Technology

Refer to Policy 7.2A.4



Increasing use and availability of high technology communications technology have created powerful tools for enhancing community education in Sunnyvale. Cable television, computer networks and databases, and other new opportunities for information exchange are changing and increasing the distribution and availability of information. These changes will potentially affect the type and nature of citizen involvement in Sunnyvale. The City recognizes the need to address appropriate use of high technology forms of communication.

CABLE TELEVISION

Refranchising of the TCI cable television system serving Sunnyvale in 1989 has increased opportunities for use of public education and government (PEG) access to the cable system. Beginning in 1993, the City Council chambers were equipped with cameras for telecasts of City Council and board and commission meetings. This capability provides citizens with direct access to information about Council proceedings and decisions and significantly augments the political audience for City policy making. Cable television has also enabled the City to broadcast programs of relevance to the Sunnyvale community, such as the visit of President Clinton and the Little League World Championships, which serve to enhance community pride and identity.

A limitation of PEG access for community education is that only 46% of Sunnyvale households are subscribers of TCI, and only subscribers can receive the municipal channel, KSUN. Sunnyvale's 4,000 mobile homes are unable to receive cable television, and businesses do not have access to TCI. Moreover, the cable television industry is subject to technological, economic and regulatory changes in coming years which could lead to greater competition or consolidation. How these changes affect the City's PEG opportunities will be monitored.

The City will continue to review the appropriate amount and use of PEG access television in light of other alternatives for information dissemination, as well as balancing resources. Although members of the community have expressed strong interest in establishing public access cable television capabilities for Sunnyvale, the City Council adopted a policy, based on resource constraints, which prevents the City from supporting ongoing operations of a public access studio or programming. The Sunnyvale School District, in concert with other districts, also is exploring the possibility of establishing an educational channel as well.

Private sector initiatives, such as by Pacific Telesis and TCI, to install high technology communications infrastructure may significantly alter the future role of cable television and PEG programming.

COMPUTERS

Advances in computer networking capabilities increase the potential for computers to become an informational tool for the City. The increased pace of information exchange puts more pressure on the City to be responsive, and may change the nature of the City's interaction with the business and resident communities. The capacity to link personal computing systems among homes, businesses and the City creates opportunities for provision of on-line services such as information distribution, review of public records, filing of applications, and feedback and exchange between citizens and staff. For example, the Cities of Cupertino and Santa Monica provide electronic access for citizens to selected departments and sources of information. Networks also provide an opportunity for creation of centralized databases to improve coordination and information exchange among citizens, community-based organizations and the City. Regional efforts, such as Joint Venture Silicon Valley, are exploring the potential for public-private partnerships and cooperative ventures to develop an electronic information infrastructure.

APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY

The prevalence of high technology industries in Sunnyvale indicates a high level of computer literacy and availability among the population. However, it is important to consider the needs of residents who may not have access to information and services distributed over computer networks. This consideration leads to the concept of "appropriate use of technology." City staff must evaluate the optimum method for dissemination of information and communication with citizens in light of the intended audience, goals of the community education process, and available resources. In some cases, it may be most efficient and effective to develop a computer system for the purposes of informing citizens, while in others use of a telephone information hotline, news releases, or personal contact may be more appropriate.

The development of a comprehensive policy or decision guidelines to address the issues of costs, benefits, access and security of telecommunications technology for the City and its residents and businesses is a very high priority. Given the rapid pace of change affecting the nature and uses of this technology, such a policy would by necessity be adaptable to such changes. Especially as the City must invest its resources carefully during periods of constraint, policies and decisions regarding technology must effect genuine opportunities to improve the ability to serve most of its citizens at reasonable costs.



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COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

“To draw citizens back to the public stage, we need civic learning that takes place through voluntary organizations of all sorts as well as through formal education. Such learning must begin with people’s everyday concerns and teach the craft of cooperative problem solving.”

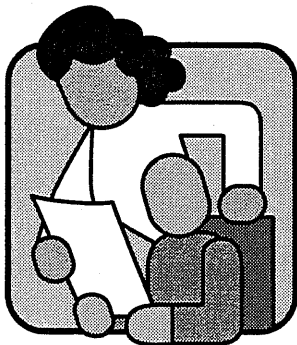
—Harry C. Boyte,
*Commonwealth, a Return to
Citizen Politics*, Free Press,
1990

Active involvement by all segments of the community – citizens, organizations, and businesses – enables local government to address and meet relevant needs and issues. Community involvement can be direct contact between an individual and the City, such as volunteering in the Library or serving on an advisory committee, or indirect contact through participation in a neighborhood or community group such as SNAP or PARTNERS. Moreover, involvement of citizens in a wide range of civic activities, such as service clubs, school PTA’s, and recreational or interest groups strengthens the community fabric and ability to resolve community issues.

The City’s goal in promoting community involvement is to encourage a sense of commitment to the community. As the diversity of the community increases and the demands on local government become more challenging, so does the need to create community cohesiveness and provide services through involvement of all sectors of the community. Increasing the scope of opportunities for community involvement through partnerships with local organizations, thus creating a wider base for contact and participation in local government services is an important strategy in bringing local government closer to the community. As a result, the City will be better able to identify the needs of residents and efficiently allocate resources in response.

Volunteerism

Refer to Policy 7.2B.2



Volunteering in local government increases the sense of community “ownership” of services, provides an opportunity for citizens to learn about government and services while contributing to their community, expands the city’s ability to provide services to residents and enhances staff sensitivity to citizen concerns. Volunteers also provide the City with a conduit of information regarding City services and programs.

The Volunteer Services Program, established in 1981, acts as a focal point for all voluntary citizen participation activities related to City programs. Volunteer Services places volunteers in City programs, coordinates recruitment and training of board and commission

applicants, acts as a liaison for citizen initiated projects, serves as a source of expertise and referral for local organizations using volunteers, and coordinates citywide promotion and recognition of volunteers.

Volunteers have contributed significantly to services and quality of life in Sunnyvale. They have assisted in both major projects, such as the implementation of the on-line library catalog or production of City events like Hands on the Arts; and in ongoing services, working beside City staff with goals for community self reliance in emergencies or enhancing the quality of life in neighborhoods. Volunteers are becoming an essential mode of service delivery itself.

Several statewide and nationwide trends show increasing use of volunteers, including national emphasis on community service from the federal government and increasingly limited revenues for local government. The City will continue to explore and identify new opportunities for meaningful volunteer involvement and encourage residents to participate in local government.

Community Organizations

Refer to Policy 7.2B.3

Leadership Sunnyvale, a community organization supported by the Sunnyvale Chamber of Commerce, sponsors a 9-month program of seminars and leadership development sessions designed to give participants the opportunity to expand the skills needed to become more effectively involved in civic affairs.

Community organizations are often formed in response to a specific issue or concern. These organizations become a mechanism for communication and activism by involving residents in their community or strengthening neighborhood contacts. The degree of self-reliance and autonomy created by community organizations helps residents identify with their causes, neighborhoods or like-minded citizens and increases overall community involvement.

Community organizations therefore are a very valuable mechanism for involving citizens. Citizens who may be reluctant to participate directly in civic affairs may be more likely to participate in an organization which addresses the needs of their immediate neighborhood or interest. Through participation in community organizations, citizens gain an understanding of how they can effect change, and learn how to influence local government decisions and services at the grass-roots level.

Studies show that citizens across the country are feeling increasingly disenfranchised by government and perceive themselves to be powerless in governmental processes (Richard C. Harwood, "Citizens and Politics: A View from Main Street America," *Western City*, The League of California Cities). As a result, citizens may be less likely to participate in government, even though their interest is high and needs are great. Partnerships between the City and community organizations can provide a way for cities to bring citizens into governmental processes while serving their community, increasing trust between residents and City Hall, and diminishing the distance between government and constituents.

Refer to Policy 7.2B.4

City Hall has traditionally been one of the centers of community involvement in Sunnyvale. In the future, however, the City hopes to shift its role from the center to one as a facilitator of community involvement; that is, the City can become a participant in a network of individuals, community-based organizations, businesses, and local government and institutions. While community-based organizations have historically formed around negative issues, the City is interested in strengthening the role of community based organizations and has begun to take the role of helping communities form around positive issues.

As municipal resources become more constrained in the future, there will be a more important need for effective partnerships between the City and committed community organizations, businesses and volunteers to achieve community goals and deliver public services. This partnership will require the development of a greater understanding and commitment from the City to encourage and support collaborative efforts. It will also lead, however, to a stronger and more self-sufficient network of citizens and organizations. Overall, a greater degree of collaboration between the citizens, community organizations and the City will be needed in the future to facilitate the evolution of public participation as a method of community problem solving.

Neighborhoods

Refer to Policy 7.2B.5



A 1993 study found that successful citizen participation programs across the country were focused on an established system of neighborhood organizations, which allow for efficiency of scale while providing necessary opportunities for individual participation.

Berry, J.M., Ken, *The Rebirth of Urban Democracy*,
The Bookings Institute, 1993.

Strong neighborhood associations and organizations historically have not been common in Sunnyvale. With a few exceptions, development of these organizations has tended to center around issues involving schools, immediate controversies, or other neighborhood concerns. As the proportion of children in the community has become smaller, as schools have closed, and as residents are required to spend more time working or commuting to afford housing costs, the sense of neighborhood has not thrived.

Municipal services, however, affect the quality of neighborhoods; some services such as crime prevention, emergency preparedness or neighborhood preservation are most effective when residents know their neighbors and can work together to improve their neighborhood. The City, in the last decade, has focused more attention on developing neighborhood networks such as SNAP or PARTNERS to help residents develop a greater level of participation in their neighborhoods. These programs have led to other benefits in addition to the specific services being delivered, including a new method to disseminate information and receive community feedback; identifying potential community leaders; and building more neighborhood and civic pride and capability for problem-solving.

Neighborhood associations have historically been most active, in Sunnyvale as well as in other cities, in geographically defined areas which share common physical elements. The Lakewood Village Association formed around the issue of enhancement of City services, while the Raynor Park Association was originally intended to prevent City annexation. Most of Sunnyvale was developed during a single period of time and has few geographically identifying boundaries to focus neighborhood formation.

Just as the City will need to foster effective partnerships with community organizations of all types, it will need to continue and strengthen relationships with neighborhood organizations as well. The goal of building a more self-reliant community network of neighborhoods will be crucial to the City's ability to provide quality municipal services in the face of financial limits of local governments.

Local Government and Schools

Refer to Policy 7.2B.1c



Although most high school students take courses in civics or government, they receive little exposure to the role of local government, its impact on the quality of life in communities, and how citizens can affect government decisions. Yet, local government is the most open level of government to citizen involvement, and has the most direct effect on the people it serves.

The City has developed very effective partnerships with local school districts in the areas of public safety, parks and recreation, and child care. This strong cooperation has not yet extended to include issues such as local government curriculum. Even so, the City has worked with specific schools and teachers to include topics such as environmental protection, library use, and fire and crime prevention.

Educating students about local government, therefore, can lead to greater civic involvement and awareness throughout students' lives. In addition, as current and future users of City programs and services and a population that will feel the long term effects of City policies, students are an important constituency which should be represented in City processes. The City would like to increase communication with teachers and school districts to include local government in school curricula at all levels of education.

Students and community organizations have worked independently to increase student involvement in community affairs. A leadership program for high school juniors, "Tomorrow's Leaders Today," sponsored by Leadership Sunnyvale, was begun in 1993 and is designed to help a diversified group of youth acquire skills and become active leaders of the future.

The League of California Cities sponsors a local government initiative for high school teachers throughout the state, and the City has sponsored eight participants from Sunnyvale.